

From P22

established links across half the planet to share technology and expertise and to work together to solve technical and administrative problems.

New Zealand's telecommunications leaders, well aware of the direction of the waves of change in the industry, have moved to incorporate new Canadian-developed technologies and advanced methods into the New Zealand Post Office telecommunications system, and to offer New Zealanders enhanced telecommunications and information-management services at affordable prices. There is already a substantial amount of optical fibres — employing light, instead of electricity, to communicate — in the NZPO network, digital systems have been installed and NZPO officials have been seeking improved operational methodologies in all aspects of their operations.

Convergence

The convergence of telecommunications and computer technologies is vir-

tually complete, and telecommunications and information management are closely intertwined. Importation of technology and expertise, and international joint ventures, are becoming common in the industry. Such realization has resulted in the production of many Canadian-developed technologies by major international companies such as MITEL, which has long been established in New Zealand, and Northern Telecoms, which has recently established a facility. In addition to its production facility, MITEL established a research and development facility in Wellington, New Zealand's 'high tech' centre.

Even in the solution of less sophisticated telephone problems the lessons learned in Canada have found application in New Zealand. Areas were being served by stringing telephone lines over common telephone poles, but because of soil instability after heavy rain where land had been cleared for sheep grazing, the pole lines were difficult and costly to maintain, and alternatives had to be examined. In the difficult Marlborough Sounds region,

the problem was to replace other unsuccessful means of providing telephone service. After many trials the NZPO discovered that the SR Telecom system developed for similar terrain in Canada was the installation which provided trouble-free service in this remote and rugged location.

It would appear that these systems which were pioneered in Canada to meet rural telephone requirements across the difficult terrain to scattered communities in Canada, have found a home on the other side of the world.

Management

However, New Zealand and Canadian telecommunications leaders have recognised that even the best technology on its own does not guarantee service as, where and when the user wants it and at reasonable prices. The key to good service is the effective management of the system — the integrated coordination of all the equipment and human elements in the system.

Since the time of Alexander Graham Bell it is that kind of managerial expertise that New Zealand has sought from Canada as the country moves to leap-frog into the future. Joint New Zealand-Canadian efforts in telecommunications have expanded markedly since 1980, as the increased number of exchange visits by telecommunications officials of both countries indicates. In 1985 a delegation of senior officials of the NZPO and the South Pacific Bureau of Economic Cooperation/Telecommunications Development Project (Spectel) visited several Canadian telecommunications equipment manufacturers and operating companies as well as consulting branches of the major telephone companies across Canada.

'New Zealand and Canada enjoy preferential tariffs within the framework of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade,' Mr Berry of Bell Canada International commented. 'However, both countries have come to recognise that industry which is internationally competitive is essential to a nation's sharing in the international export market.'

During the 1986 visit to Canada by the Postmaster General, Johnathan Hunt, and NZPO Director General, Pat McInerney, it was observed that the NZPO and Canada are working together in a mutually beneficial way, sharing knowledge and the results of common experience. There has been a strengthening of the relationship during the 1980s, and the joint efforts of the supplying companies have led to an effective transfer of information and technology.



An SR Telecoms Ltd high technology solution in Marlborough Sounds.

